

Public Relations  
for  
Colleges and Universities  
*A Manual of Practical Procedure*

by

Christopher Edgar Persons  
*Vice-President, McCann-Erickson, Inc.*

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## Importance

stitutions for which they are responsible. This necessity will be found to extend far beyond the acquisition of funds, however important that continues to be. It will extend to the justification of the institution itself and the objectives with which it is concerned.

This situation needs more analysis than it generally receives, and such analysis should aid any administrator and his associates in developing a program that will continue to function effectively as long as it is intelligently operated. Neither the institution nor the effort stands much chance without such a program. Nor can any such undertaking expect to succeed over the years with only pieces and fragments of a program, adopted possibly because they appear to have produced results somewhere else.

Above all other institutions, a college or a university should be able to analyze itself. Only when it has done so may it undertake a program of public relations adapted to its own needs. The essential factors of such a program are the same in all instances; their applications will be different for each institution.

The public relations of any organization are the rightful responsibilities of its chief administrative officer. However he may arrange and delegate, as to operations, the responsibility itself remains his because he, and he alone, represents the institution as a whole. Presumably, also, no one else knows, as does he, the purposes and objectives of the institution as he sees them. Some of what he knows he might find difficulty in explaining even to his trustees—it is so intangible, so deep, so pervasive, so subtle. He is, in fact, two men—an administrator of policies and an embodiment of what he believes his institution is and ought to be. Both of these men are concerned with pub-

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port at the end of the year, but otherwise they may be poison. What administrator is there, in any institution of higher learning, who does not devoutly wish this or that activity—sometimes a dozen of them—had never been started? They are worse than excrescences—often, they are malignant; but the next one that comes along is likely to find a welcome. What eventuates is likely to be a lopsided structure, lacking coherence, dignity, and plan, and, unhappily, as stone-broke as before, or even more so. Broad is the path that leadeth to destruction. Meanwhile, other institutions, already vastly more affluent, continue to recruit additional endowments, establish new professorships and schools, build new buildings, and enlarge their real usefulness.

There is one type of educational institution that always can get, and does receive, financial support with its ensuing values. It is not confined to any classification or grouping. It cuts across all lines of educational grouping, and, because its revenues are more or less commensurate with its activities, it is able to render more useful service to the community and the world—which ability, eventually, is the only justification for any school, college, or university. It is the institution bearing the magic imprint of "prestige." By prestige is meant public recognition of a worthy undertaking especially well done. The "public" may be no more than a roomful, or a handful, of scientists. It may be a whole nation. It may be the whole world. For any institution, it should be commensurate with the orbit of the institution's usefulness.

Any college, any university, may aspire to and may attain prestige. It is not a matter of size, nor of wealth. Before it had any endowment to speak of, the prestige

## Instruments and Objectives

will say so, and will prove it. Herein is the final advantage in having people as instruments instead of trying to use mere processes or inanimate things or unrelated projects. An axe of itself cannot walk out and chop down a tree, but a man can go out and get an axe and do it. All you need is the man, and there are available, as we have seen, hundreds and perhaps thousands of these men.

No administrative head undertakes to direct all courses or teach all classes in his institution. He probably does not attempt to handle personally everything within his administrative orbit. He has one or more vice-presidents, a registrar, a dean, and heads of schools and colleges, if not in accordance with his needs at least with some regard to the necessities and magnitude of the institution. In a word, he delegates. Whether he does so through a provost or a group of deans or directly to the department heads, is a question of dimensions and custom. Mark Hopkins on one end of a log probably would have at least a secretary, if he were alive today, to look after his office. And the administrator, in order to delegate, must first organize.

It is said that the United States Food Administration in World War I was the only war board without an organization chart; yet everywhere within it were clearly defined groups of men doing the things they could do best. Lack of a chart meant only that any man was eligible for any duties he might be asked to undertake. The organization was there, just the same, a fluid instead of a frozen organization, with one of the world's ablest organizers and administrators at its head. The Food Administration started from scratch and could organize as it liked. Educational institutions are generally embellished or cluttered by accumulations of not too careful planning, inherited

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### *Group Activities*

IT IS AT this point that the administrator begins to delegate and that other people in considerable force begin to help him. This is the second place where the program may run clear off the track. Merely to gain the approval of an additional number of people may be laudable, but it is not sufficient. They must somehow go to work if success in large measure is to be attained. It is conceivable that the administrator may have well in mind the principal things he wants each group to do, but no administrator is omniscient. A possible course is to invite each nucleus to offer proposals as to how it can be most useful within its own division and without reference to other groups. These limitations are sufficiently important to merit emphasis if the immediate temptation for every group to lay out a plan for a whole new university with unlimited endowment and scope is to be avoided.

Here is the area of prestige. How can our group best assist in increasing the institution's prestige within this area? That is the problem for each group to consider and solve, always in close touch with the administrator. This part of the effort may be as informal as the conversation already mentioned between the alumnus who wanted to go to work and the president who wanted twenty million

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stimulate the faculty, and it may prove a most potent weapon in building prestige in the outside world. On many faculties, back-door access to trustees exists; front-door contacts would seem preferable. So long as a trustee has no place on the campus to sit down and no one to talk to without feeling that his presence is an interruption, he will be of no use in the program of prestige. The heaviest artillery is out of action. Here is posed a decision and a task for the administrator.

In virtually every institution the alumni are organized in geographic groups and areas and once a year each group gives a dinner to the president or his representatives. Here they sing the old songs and learn, briefly, of new enterprises and, less briefly, of new problems. For an evening, they try to turn the clock back and forget the waistline. Among the more enterprising, and especially among the men, there is also a continuing interest in what goes on in athletics and fraternities, and the administration is not without first-hand information as to their views. Finally, there is always a group whose active interest rests upon a real appreciation of the school's value and service in its area of prestige. It is from this group that the alumni nucleus has been selected, and it is this group that must be increased in numbers and usefulness.

Probably the concept of alumni usefulness most widely prevailing is as a source of much-needed contributions. In some institutions this usefulness, based upon prestige-appreciation, has been developed to a high degree. In many others the returns are always somewhat disappointing. There is no reason why alumni should not be regularly invited to contribute to their Alma Mater at least a part of the money expended by the institution itself on

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have been created. He will find, probably, an alumni publication, some sort of public information service, various types of official publications, such as announcements, catalogues, and reports; there will be books or articles produced by members of the faculty, public appearances by members of the faculty and by the president, public events, such as commencements, the university press if one exists, the library, the annual alumni dinners, student activities of all sorts, and whatever service relationships exist between the institution and the outside world.

In institutions where public relations have not been a prime concern, and even in some of the rest, a good many of these activities are likely to be found somewhat drowsy and ineffective. The official bulletins and announcements may not have been materially changed for twenty-five or fifty years, and some now may not be even reasonably informative. This has an evident relationship to any project for increasing either the number or the quality of students and to the attitude of students already enrolled. Faculty members may be rendering services to the community or to the world which somehow are overlooked. The alumni publication nearly always is valuable in its listing of alumni activities; it generally can be made still more valuable if the alumni officers have become active in the prestige program. The routine correspondence of the institution may be worth study by those in charge of it, with the purposes of the program in mind; an examination of it is a matter of regular routine in some institutions. And there probably will be groups for whom no informative support has been developed because thus far they have not been engaged in any activity of this nature. The necessities of the program as it develops will,

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## *PREFACE*

This book has a very simple purpose. It presents a course of thought and action which, if followed with even reasonable fidelity by the college or university administrator, should result in public relations that will be productive for his institution and helpful to the administrator himself.

What is undertaken, therefore, is to define and explain the administrator's own position and function as to public relations and, further, to construct a sound public-relations procedure. By this is meant a procedure enlisting and including all the elements that belong in a well-organized, feasible attitude and operation.

The fact that public relations, wisely conducted, represent one of the very few enterprises in the educational field that improve, rather than impair, the annual budget would alone seem to justify the increasing amount of attention they appear to be receiving. A better justification is their usefulness in establishing a closer relationship between institutions of higher education and the rest of the world.

To Mr. Paul H. Davis, I am indebted for much encouragement and valuable information.

C. E. P

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

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# I

## *Importance*

DIVERSITY born of freedom is the crowning glory of American institutions of higher education—diversity of method, of curriculum, of purpose, above all, diversity of opinion, belief, and thought that perplexes and sometimes irritates the inhabitants of a mechanized and streamlined economy. If it were not for this diversity, so productive of free minds, all educational institutions might as well be of one pattern or series of patterns—and there would be little reason why all should not become enterprises of the state.

In seeking to avoid this calamity, many colleges and universities have become intensely concerned with their future prospects and realistically aware that their former casual, unorganized, and somewhat ineffective methods of making public contacts are inadequate to provide much assurance. So, all across the land, as hopefully as the flowers of spring, campaigns and drives begin to blossom. There is usually no reason for their not succeeding, individually, in raising the amounts set as their goals. That accomplished, some pressure will have been relieved. Everyone will be tired out; and, except for the immediate financial advantage, which may be considerable, the institution will be about where it was. It will be some time before another drive can be started.

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Campaigns of this kind have been tried and found wanting many times in stable commercial enterprises and organizations and have been discarded in favor of steady, continuing, well-organized efforts toward broader objectives. In their internal application these more steadfast methods have always been understood by educational administrators, but only in comparatively few instances has their necessity or usefulness been appreciated in creating and maintaining external relationships for the institution itself.

Most estimates of impending mortality among institutions of higher education are gloomy. Predictions of nonsurvival run as high as fifty per cent. This by no means indicates a decrease of fifty per cent (or of any other percentage) in numbers of students. On the contrary, the indications are that, for a considerable period at least, there will be more young people in schools and colleges than ever before. If the number of institutions now existing decreases, students will be found in larger numbers in the gift-supported, and state-supported institutions that survive. Their presence in state-supported colleges and universities will be reflected in increased tax rates.

Colleges or universities that have no tax rate to fall back upon, and even some that are so provided for, must look to other sources of support with the full realization that large lump-sum beneficences are less and less likely to be available. Somewhat as the armed forces in World War II were compelled to reach out everywhere into the civilian economy and to organize all available resources, most college administrators from now on face the necessity of developing methods and machinery that will function actively and continuously in the interests of the in-

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lic relations; but it is the second man who, alone, is capable of their proper direction and he, alone, who realizes the extent of their possibilities for lasting good.

This responsibility can be a burden added to other burdens, or it can be an implement of constant utility and high value in carrying out the purposes of the administrator. It will probably be one or the other, and only the administrator can make the choice. If he elects to look upon his public-relations responsibilities as a nuisance, he will not be disappointed. If he seeks to find in them new sources of influence and help, he will get them. The one thing he cannot successfully attempt is to ignore them; they will always be present, always be around him, like the air. Only when he, or his institution, is dead will they cease to concern him.

What, then, is the nature and meaning of this inevitable responsibility? And why is it inevitable?

The term *public relations* defines itself and is characteristic of a free people with full power to extend or withhold approval and support for any person, organization, or undertaking. Among all Americans in public life, Abraham Lincoln is outstanding as a master of personally conducted public relations. No one else has approached him. His biographers largely agree not only in their estimates of his intuitive perceptions of all that public relations imply but equally in their admiration of his deftness and planning, when deftness and planning were needed. His unstudied reactions to the endless streams of wounded soldiers, returning regiments, sad mothers, earnest Abolitionists, office seekers, and well-wishers—these were no more phenomenal than the sagacity that permitted Fremont to force himself out of



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his Missouri command, that changed by a word or two the whole tone of Seward's defiance of England, that recognized instantly the wrongness of the Trent affair, and that enabled Horace Greeley to hang his own hide on the fence in negotiations with the Confederates in Canada. Other such instances will occur offhand to almost everyone. Beneath it all lay Lincoln's one unswerving purpose; secure on this firm base, he found opportunity for endless variations and expedients. As he himself put it, "My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and, if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that."

It is true, also, that Lincoln had faith in the "common people," a point much dwelt upon; but he knew they had to be informed, and he never missed an opportunity to inform them. Beyond this was a trait seldom mentioned by his biographers. Owing probably to his circuit riding, his rough-and-tumble practice of law, and the seasoning of political combats, Lincoln appears to have developed a solid belief and confidence in his ability to convince people of the rightness of his position and to bring them eventually to the active support of his cause. It may be that this belief was the mainspring of his endless patience. And to it was joined an objective evaluation of the forces in opposition—the depressions of defeat, the machinations of politicians, the weariness of war, which led him, in the black August of 1864, to write the dispassionate prediction of his own probable defeat in the coming November election.

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That he was not then defeated may have been due less to any intervening event than to the cumulative effect of his personal public relations, objectives, and procedures in the preceding years. In any case, Lincoln, burdened almost beyond belief with the conduct of a nation during a great war, devoted more personal time to the public relations of his administration than any President before or since. He made use of his secretaries, Hay and Nicolai; of old friends, of Senators and Congressmen; he sought to persuade men by talking with their wives; he utilized inspired articles in newspapers and magazines; he used his authority as President; he used every device then existing, all with admirable discrimination; and the direction and control of all of these never passed from his hands.

To any interested administrator, a persistent study of Lincoln's presidential years will provide a working knowledge of public relations beyond the scope of any textbook. Yet its components were simplicity itself. They were, first, a clear knowledge of his own purpose and a firm belief in it; second, a confidence in his ability to win others to his side; third, unlimited patience; fourth, a wide knowledge of available means and how to employ them; and, fifth, the expenditure of the time and thought required for planning and executing his procedures.

All of these ingredients are essential to the wise conduct of public relations. None of them can be ignored, even though assistance is required to make them operative. A good administrator can and will develop such assistance without losing his own immediate control. Nor will loyal associates ever wish it otherwise. Public relations must center in the administrative head.

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The administrator who will accept and act upon the five essentials of Lincoln's procedure will be in a fair way toward the mastery of his public relations. Some of his problems, for very good reasons, may never be solved, but he will control and direct a powerful force. It will never control him. Occasional skirmishes he may lose, perhaps sometimes a battle, but never a war in this area. And he will find unexpected and possibly undreamed-of sources of strength and support for his institution and its upbuilding available at his call.

That every institution, like every individual, exists in an atmosphere of public relations, willy-nilly, and that the only option is whether these relations shall be wholesome or unwholesome is now quite generally agreed upon, but this widespread understanding is rather recent. Furthermore, in this relationship, the public has the final say. Lincoln understood that. It is an important consideration for the administrator of an educational institution to keep in mind, both because the penalties of bad public relations are severe and because the rewards of good public relations are correspondingly great.

Some of the noblest projects in our history have failed—as Lincoln's purposes might also have failed—because the public did not understand or appreciate them. Great industrial organizations also have suffered from the same lack of good relationship with the public, to their own financial loss and to the discredit of the whole system of independent enterprise. Some of them have sought, largely through the method of trial and error, to remedy this, and through their efforts some of the soundest and ablest of our public-relations programs have come into being.

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All these considerations may seem to have little connection with institutions and men devoted to the search for truth and to the dissemination of what, for the moment at least, appears to be the nearest approximation to truth that they are able to find in the light of current knowledge. What has pure science to do with public relations? Perhaps nothing, but public relations have an immense amount to do with pure science. The billions of dollars lavished upon scientific endeavor in the last few years came straight from the people through their accredited representatives in Congress and with the full knowledge that the expenditure constituted a burden that even holds over to generations yet to be born. The people were willing to assume this burden in order to win the war. Equally they are willing to be taxed for the furtherance of education, and individual men and women are willing to donate large sums toward its support, because the American people believe intensely in the power and value of education as an instrument for bettering the lives of their children and improving the status of mankind. The past and present public relations of educational institutions as a group may at least claim credit for this approbation and for the financial and moral support that go with it.

Good public relations also are a powerful influence in facilitating the dissemination and even the acceptance of whatever messages of belief and help any given institution may see fit to make public. They influence students and parents in their choice of a university. They are a source of personal pride and practical advantage to alumni. In a dozen ways, they advance the cause of higher education.

## II

### *Foundation*

INSTITUTIONS of higher learning in the United States work harder at public relations than do any other kinds of organizations outside of politics. Some are quite frank about them; others probably would not admit being engaged in them at all. Some, possibly, leave them to chance.

What is it all about?

The right answer to this question is of the utmost consequence. It is as important as his target is for a rifleman; without it a good deal of effort may serve no purpose whatever, as it actually happens in some instances. To have an objective is not enough. It must be the right objective.

Here we may well go back to Lincoln. He knew his objective was to save the Union. When other people tried to make him believe his purpose was, above all, the abolition of slavery, he refused to budge, although he too detested slavery, as did many leaders and soldiers in the Confederate Army as well. They and he were at war over the right of individual states to secede from the Union, and he never for a moment allowed himself to be diverted from that fundamental situation.

The list of accredited colleges and universities in the United States comprises more than 1,700 institutions. It

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may seem impossible to propose for all of them an identical objective in public relations. They are the most individualistic organizations on earth in method of operation, in administration, in faculty, in historical background, and, if we may credit their songs, customs, and traditions, in student body as well. He who fails to discriminate dear old Siwash from dear old St. Boniface finds himself in outer darkness. And, oddly enough, some of these distinctions are true. However individualistic the graduate may appear to be, some schools do put a stamp on their product. Take my Alma Mater, for example. Or take yours.

Then, too, there are liberal-arts colleges, technical schools, universities with undergraduate schools and universities without them, men's colleges, women's colleges, coeducational colleges, state universities, and independent, gift-supported institutions, all differing as to classification and in each group differing among themselves. Likewise, they differ in their needs. One needs new buildings, another a new faculty; all need—and always need—more endowment, more scholarships and fellowships; not a few need more students or better students.

Beyond this, and of immense significance, is the truly sensational speed with which the whole educational scene is changing, actually from day to day. The rise of junior colleges, the vast expansion of state universities, the spectacular growth of endowments, and the impact of war are some of the outward and visible manifestations of this development. Between 1920 and 1940, the endowment of Harvard University rose from \$43,000,000 to \$141,000,000. The University of California, a state institution, ranks high in the list of those receiving private

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benefactions. Institutions not especially well known ten<sup>4</sup> years ago are now scholastically eminent, and some of the formerly eminent have sagged. The University of Chicago takes an interest in the publication of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and has brought motion pictures into the field of education; its various internal academic adjustments are known to all educators. War has given research an impetus that promises to carry over into peacetime. What will happen to the stout New England college, what will happen to the hundreds of worthy and always needy small colleges of the Middle West whose contributions to the nation are out of all proportion to their means and faculties, what will happen even to some of the giants is not clearly predictable.

All this is but an inkling of what is in the mind of the administrative head of every institution of higher learning in America today, and all that he knows and thinks will enter into the conduct of his public relations.

It is not even certain that the future of all these institutions, great and small, will be determined by their existing or potential usefulness. In this educational hurly-burly there may be lost some of the rare flavors and some of the real values of American life. Bigness may cease to be an asset, if it ever was; and smallness never was a very good defense in anything. Even the well-endowed and well-circumstanced institution may wisely take Scriptural heed lest it fall. Each must look out for itself in a field where competition is intense beyond the comprehension of those not intimately familiar with its problems. The paramount object of every chief administrator must necessarily be to protect and increase the usefulness of his own institution if he intends it to survive. For that pur-

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pose, financial support is basic. Nothing can be maintained, nothing can be built, without it.

It is at this point that educational institutions and their administrators so often in the past have run into an open switch, and the educational right of way is littered with their wreckage. The administrator who all day long is compelled to give negative answers to proposals of real merit, often involving comparatively trifling expenditures, who sees some of his best men siphoned off by institutions of seemingly unlimited affluence, who sees other good men loyally carrying on in spite of more advantageous offers, and who knows where he could get badly needed replacements if only there were just a little more leeway in the budget may easily confuse immediate advantage with long-term policy. It may be, sometimes, that he has no choice. Either way, the chances are against him. He represents one of 1,700 educational institutions and almost innumerable other philanthropies beating upon the doors of the affluent.

This urgent need for quick money bears other and strange fruits, perhaps the most usual being malformation through overexpansion. Tempted by a million dollars, a well-integrated liberal-arts college becomes, overnight, a university with a medical school, a school of engineering, or a school of business administration to justify the new dignity. The college itself is just as threadbare as before; it may become more so, since the anticipated revenues for the new undertaking may not suffice, yet the new school, once having been started, must be maintained.

Less spectacular but equally insidious are some of the offers of gifts for additional expansions within the existing framework. These look good in the president's re-



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of Oberlin College girdled half the world. In advance of the days, and the techniques, of the great foundations, Oberlin educated its students to aspire to the service of humanity, and many of them entered that service. It was doing well the particular things it undertook to do, and its prestige was related to those things. That its purposes were not those of a great university, or even those of other colleges, is immaterial, so long as they were worthy of one college. When endowments happily came, Oberlin did not attempt to rival the great universities or become one of them. It stayed Oberlin College, with a student body of fewer than 2,000. We may consider, also, Dartmouth, Williams, or Bowdoin; Vassar, Smith, or Bryn Mawr. All have prestige. None is large.

Prestige is a hard master. Its demands are ruthless, and its road is long and difficult. It cannot be ballyhooed or press-agented into existence, nor can it be long maintained where the conditions of it are not met. The efforts to circumvent its exactions are always before us, but they need not concern us. They are fool's gold. Its rewards are proportionate to its exactions. From true prestige all scholastic blessings flow. It maintains and provides faculty eminence, adequate facilities, and able students, because it provides the means for accomplishing these objectives. Take it away and nothing remains but the role of the beggar and the apologist or the blue-sky promoter. These roles are not usually successful in any enterprise.

The first requirement of prestige is a definition of the area for which it is claimed. The prestige of a technical school does not depend primarily upon its courses in the humanities, although some such courses may be given and should be good; a college of liberal arts will no doubt

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offer chemistry, physics, and biology as parts of a well-rounded fundamental education; but it is not expected to surpass in these branches the schools primarily devoted to them. A university assumes the obligation of excellence in all the schools it maintains, since each is, in effect, and probably in practice, a separate institution with its own special objective. Without definition, prestige is meaningless—it does not exist as an unrelated concept. There must be such definition—in the mind of the administrator and in fact.

All the selfless effort, all the research, all the anonymous and devoted teaching and striving that the earnest scholar can wish for himself or for others need not conflict with a true concept of prestige, which is not of the moment and not to be gained through any sort of notoriety. If it is there the fame of it will spread, sooner or later. And there will be plenty of legitimate and proper ways by which the institution as a whole may explain itself without damage to the reputation or feelings of the most retiring member of the faculty.

One very simple test of whether prestige is not merely the right answer but the only answer to the problem of maintaining and developing sound public relations is to try to substitute something else as a solution. It is the ablest, not the weakest, among the law schools, the medical schools, the women's colleges, the technical schools, and the colleges of liberal arts that have superior faculties, adequate endowments, and waiting lists of exceptional students and can get more of each. This fact will appear to the administrator to constitute either a hopeless situation or a great opportunity; a reasonable amount of examination will lead to the conviction that it is an opportunity.

### III

## *Instruments and Objectives*

THE REAL instruments of good public relations are people. How could it be otherwise? How people think and what they do with reference to any institution are all there is to public relations of any sort and these elements are conditioned primarily by other people. It is well to be fixed on this point, because the inducements to stray away from it are numerous and because otherwise it is impossible to develop a public-relations program of much real value.

It is the experience of all who have tried it that column-inches in newspapers may add up to no public relations at all or to very bad ones; and the same may be true of athletics, radio, institutional publications, and other devices, although each of these may prove valuable in its place.

An eminent newspaper publisher, questioned recently by an educational institution as to his opinion of the institution's public relations, said: "You asked me that question two years ago, and my reply was that I didn't know you had any public relations. I say now, I think your public relations are excellent." In this interval of two years, none of the superficial factors mentioned above had been augmented; in fact, owing to the war, most of them had been abbreviated or even dropped entirely. The

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difference lay in that certain people and groups of people had gone to work, with a clear objective, and their efforts were beginning to be evident. For whatever consolation it may afford, institutions of learning are not alone in following after strange public-relations gods. Almost everyone else has done the same thing and has achieved the same overwhelming lack of results. Nothing is to be gained by performing the same worthless experiments over again or by hoping they will work in a single instance. They will never work, because they never have the right components. It is only when we begin to seek prestige in terms of people that a true perspective appears.

This state of affairs is immensely to the advantage of the college or the university for a good many reasons, the chief of which is the nature of the institution itself. Legally it is a nonprofit institution and falls outside the domain of profit-competition. Actually it is far more than that. It is an institution devoted to the welfare of humanity. It is, in America as nowhere else, integrated with the national consciousness of educational needs, and it is supported in principle by all the alumni of all like institutions. It is no more necessary to convince the average American middle-class family of the need for higher education than of the need for an automobile; and the self-made, self-educated man is likely to be the first to recognize its importance. With half or more of our college students working their way in whole or in part and with almost every boy and girl of better-than-average means attending some institution, the preferential consideration for all of them, as a group, on the part of the general public is evident. The call of business and in-

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dustry for college-educated and university-educated employees in wide areas of their operations, as well as their specific requirements for such education and training in various technical fields, including management, is potent to a degree not always fully understood. The purposes of the great philanthropic foundations relate themselves more closely to institutions of higher learning than to any other classification. And we have, increasingly, the needs of government.

Any commercial organization would ask nothing better than the esteem, respect, and honor enjoyed by every institution of higher learning that comes near meriting it and perhaps even by some that do not measure up as well as they might. To those who inhabit these charmed and almost inviolable cloisters, this attitude of regard, reverence, or forthright friendliness and good will may seem the normal state of affairs; a somewhat similar habit of thought prevails among many officers of the Army and Navy, and for much the same reasons. The graduate of the college of hard knocks knows better, and, from his own experiences, he can appreciate more fully the magnitude of the advantage it provides. This eminence, for the most part, must have been justified in some way over the years. Not to merit it would be more than a calamity to the institution. It would be a betrayal of the faith of the American people.

Nevertheless, this enviable status of education in general does not, of itself, assure the progress or permanence of any individual educational institution. Each must, frankly, look out for itself, and most of them realize this. It is not so sure that they also realize the amount of support and energy and even enthusiasm available to them

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whenever they begin to rely upon people, rather than mechanisms, to do the job.

As a rule, colleges and universities have plenty of instruments at hand for use in building their public relations. That is, they have, or can get, plenty of people to work for them. An objective for which the average man or woman will be proud to work is required, and, as in any other effort, organization and direction are implied. The number of people actively working to promote the eminence of the average college is far below the number that is available. This is due in part to lack of a clearly defined area of prestige, in part to failure to recognize prestige itself as the objective, and in part to failure somewhere to recognize the potentialities of the available instruments or to recognize that these instruments are, in fact, human beings rather than some kind of mechanical appliances. It often is due, also, to lack of organization and direction in the past, from which cause discouragements have arisen. With all these failures, there is no need for concern other than an avoidance of them.

The implements of an educational institution's public-relations program comprise, potentially, all the people in any way related to it and some who are not. The latter group may be regarded as so much manna from heaven, to be gratefully accepted when it appears. Often it is of the highest sort of usefulness. Indeed, the eventual purpose is to bring as many people as possible into this group; and for that purpose the home front must first be organized—an enterprise so considerable that it is hard to find many instances in which a well-rounded and well-integrated effort is being carried on with a clear objective in view. Yet the dimensions of the undertaking provide

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the best evidence of its possibilities for good, rather than a reason for dismay. Nobody ever had too many stout supporters or real friends. Failure to benefit by their good offices can hardly be regarded as a full use of the available resources.

However these resources are rated—and they will be found to have varying degrees of importance in varying institutions—one certainly is always with us. The embodiment of every educational institution's eminence and prestige is its faculty. No program and no institution can afford to lose sight of this fundamental, unless it is willing also to rest its claim for eminence on some ground other than that of an educational institution.

Such trades are occasionally made, on the theory that the publicity derived from some other source will repay the institution in terms of popular recognition and more students; and they sometimes work out exactly along these lines. They may also be useful in producing more income. They do not produce of themselves greater educational eminence, although the institution so publicized may and does attain greater prominence based on whatever activity it selects for special promotion. The distinction here is between enterprises fostered as beneficial to the college as an educational institution and enterprises fostered as prestige objectives in themselves. It ought not to be difficult to differentiate. If, with this understanding, the administrative head, his trustees, and his faculty agree to trade academic prestige for something else, that is their decision and their responsibility, for better or for worse; but all concerned should be fully aware of what they are doing. Apparently, sometimes they are so aware.

If we continue to assume that educational prestige in

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some form is the desired end, then we shall continue also to consider the faculty as its firm foundation. It is for this reason that this body is not only mentioned first but mentioned as above all else.

The alumni generally are considered as next to the faculty in public relations; but before we accept this rating we may well consider another group. It is the student body. A little later we may discuss more fully the significance and importance of this source of real power. At the moment it is sufficient to say that, for the most part, it is almost completely overlooked as an instrument of prestige and that, next to the faculty itself, in the long run it is probably the best we have.

Then come the alumni—in the mind of the administrator so often a headache, and a hair shirt, so critical within the family, hasty, cantankerous, sharp in the tongue, and yet so warm in the heart, so devoted and proud, so eager for Alma Mater's good name, so stoutly combative against the world, and such a shield and buckler against attack from the outside—the shock troop of the institution that is so fortunate as to command its active loyalty. Because the alumni are as a rule continuously vocal, their immense strategic value is liable to be overlooked; because of faulty perspective their loyalties are sometimes worn thin by appeals for services they cannot render and should not be expected to render. The finest army in the world is no better than its leadership.

Next on the list are the parents of students. They are intensely interested, as a rule, in the progress of their children through college. That statement deserves some pondering. They are interested in the progress of their children; they are not necessarily interested to any great



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extent in the institution itself, unless they find some special reason for being so, and it is a mistake to assume otherwise. They are a potential source of support and nothing more, unless something is done to change this status. There are four years in which to do it. After that the bills are paid, the child is graduated and launched in life, and grandchildren are a lot more interesting. Parents do not "lose interest" in the school when their children graduate—mostly, they never had it; and, mostly there is no reason why they should have had it.

We have left to the last the trustees, because, by and large, that is where they belong. As regards being of any use in a program of prestige, their value is usually the value of their names on the university publications; the university should need no such underwriting. Presumably they keep an eagle eye on investments and finances, but even this process occasionally seems to be different from the kind of active interest that made them bank presidents, heads of oil companies, or what not. On high educational authority, a "working board" of trustees is almost unknown in American educational institutions. It would be far too hasty to assume that the fault lies with the trustees. Self-starting mechanisms and perpetual motion are not among the realities.

All these groups, and all the people in them, are possible instruments to aid in the enterprise of creating prestige. It may be found that most of them are rusty. Because there are so many of them and because the day-to-day problems of the administrator pile his desk and crowd his moments, they will go right on rusting and gathering cobwebs year after year unless something is done about it. And the administrator cannot do it alone; he generally

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liabilities, procrustean operations necessitated by the budget, and like diversities of structural components; but they still are organized: they have some sort of working plan. There must, at the very least, be a school of this and a department of that—otherwise, no college.

This process can be applied and must be applied to the area of public relations. In this field the administrator who undertakes to do it all himself and the administrator who will not take time to do any of it himself are alike predestined to failure or worse. All the power, strength, and ability of any administrator is never equal to the job to be done. He always needs the help that can come only through planning and organization that enlists the services of others; and then, if he is a true administrator, the task is still beyond him. All that can be fairly said is that the better the administrator, the better the job—which is not a great deal to say. An institution, for its own good and its greater usefulness, must stand on its own feet as an institution and not as an individual. The administrator can help, according to his abilities and decisions and inclinations.

In creating prestige, all this holds good. And the first discovery may prove to be that the administrator cannot tell anyone else that which he does not know himself. Through study and consultation, he must first define, if he has not done so, his present or intended area of prestige so vividly that others, as well as himself, can apprehend it readily. Readily, for two reasons: otherwise it is not, in fact, defined; otherwise much of his effort will be wasted. What is, exactly, the nature of this institution? Why, exactly, does it merit prestige? How, exactly, does it render service? What, exactly, is the necessity for its continued

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existence? It may be that an institution is seeking to develop "a cultural synthesis of the arts and the sciences." How shall that be defined, in terms of prestige that will put people to work? When all these questions and more can be answered, perhaps in one sentence, he is beginning to define the area of prestige and beginning to have something to say that people will listen to—perhaps will even hear gladly. Then, and not sooner, he is ready to undertake to assemble his people. He knows, at least, what he wants to use them for.

One man, so confronted by his own thinking, put it all with telegraphic brevity. "This institution," he said, "is a university of high degree." It would be difficult to improve upon that working definition of an area of prestige—eight words—something to strive for, something to be proud of, something to tingle in the blood of every student, instructor, faculty member, alumnus, and trustee—a measuring-stick for all policies, proposals, and expenditures—a standard for all time. That is part of what comes from a real working definition. The administrator less clear in his mind about it is not ready to start on any program of prestige, or of public relations either.

## IV

### *Launching*

A WAR STORY that deserves immortality came from the American landing at Tarawa beach. A young officer tumbled into the command-post dugout and said to his colonel, "Sir, there are 500 men out there and I can't get them to cross that strip." The grizzled colonel told him what to do. "You must say to them, 'Who will follow me?' If only ten men follow you, that is something."

That is where and how organization for prestige is bound to start. If only ten men follow at first, that is something. As the colonel saw it, there was no other way: "You *must* say, 'Who will follow me?'"

Theoretically, everybody is in favor of academic prestige, the more the better. The principal reason so little is accomplished is that the doing frequently is not organized, and, as we have seen, one man, even the chief administrator, cannot possibly do it alone and successfully. What is now proposed is the organization and direction of all our instruments of prestige into a coherent effort, each group having its own sphere and method of operation.

This is where the administrator's definition of his institution's prestige area goes to work for him. Who will follow him? Who will go the long distance between pas-

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sive acceptance and active following—the far longer distance toward the eventual goal? There will be some who, he knows, will not follow, some who will not even accept. Yet, when the story is told, when the prestige area is defined, there will be ten men who will follow, and the administrator probably already knows who they are. Very possibly he has conferred with them before making his final definition of the area of prestige. He may very well have propounded this problem to his entire faculty and board of trustees in the very beginning, for consideration and discussion; committees may have met on it and presented their findings, and these findings may have been discussed. It all may have been stimulating and valuable; but, whatever this process, the time for it is past; the administrator has in some way arrived at a definition to which he is completely committed in his heart, and it must now be put into effect. This is when he needs his ten men.

Before anything else is done, these men must understand. They must agree. They must desire to carry out. They must know the map and their place on the map and what objective they are expected to attain. This also requires study and planning, but no more of it than is required to decide who shall teach what courses.

Even in the planning for this first step, the administrator generally can get a good deal of assistance. The point here, and always, is that if prestige is not worth the effort, this is a good place to forget all about it. There is no short cut or by-pass around the work that is to be done. There is plenty of help available in the doing of it. As in every new undertaking, the administrator is bound to devote special attention to it in its formative period.

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Leadership is contagious. All told, probably it is advantageous if only ten men follow at the start; that is about twice the number of divisions that an executive can supervise directly and with full efficiency.

Who these ten men are going to be will vary widely. It is not enough to take any ten men, whatever their status may be. As an instance, the president of the alumni association is a natural selection, possibly an inevitable selection, as one man in that field. It is the responsibility of the administrator to make him a willing and eager soldier under the banner of prestige—academic prestige and his institution's part in it. If he cannot be enlisted to the fullest extent, it is likely that nothing more can be done in that sector until he changes his mind or ceases to be president. There is neither time nor place for recalcitrants among the ten men. In every enterprise there are temporary setbacks of this sort; it is the percentage of successes that counts. Nor can men be driven or stampeded. They must be convinced to the extent of taking their share of the project on their own shoulders. Otherwise the administrator must carry it, and the purpose of organization is thus defeated.

It is assumed that the trustees already have approved the purpose in principle and that a committee in that body exists or has been designated to aid in carrying it out. To the administrator himself probably will fall permanent responsibility for the program as it relates to the faculty and the trustees.

Before anyone else, the faculty should know his purposes and objectives and should be in harmony with them; and better than anyone else they should be brought to understand that this is not a drive, not a campaign, not a

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publicity effort, but a gathering together of all the institution's manpower resources to build and enhance institutional prestige in its defined area. On the faculty, and within the faculty, the whole undertaking eventually will stand or fall. What the faculty thinks presently becomes also what many alumni believe and many students and much of the outside world. This whole effort is for the improvement of the conditions under which faculty members work, the enlargement of their opportunities for research, and the assembling of better students. Their part in it, however, will be what they, as individuals, choose to do. The natural locus for the furthering of this effort is within the faculty committee on the state of the institution or the committee most nearly of that nature, if one exists.

One of the most important selections is bound to be the choice, from the original ten men, of the right one or two to function with the student body. Here, especially, it is well to be wary. A dean of students, no matter how devoted and popular, may not be the best man for the task. The odds are against him because he is an officer and usually a disciplinarian. The ex-cheer leader and most popular alumnus may also prove a bad risk. The objective is not to aggrandize the student body but to lay certain foundations that will endure after graduation in the form of a proudly conscious obligation to the institution. An alumnus of strong character, a man who has become eminent in his field, who has genuine interest in the problems of undergraduate life while fully realizing he is no longer a part of it, and who readily commands the interest and confidence of younger people is likely to prove a success in this capacity.

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Parents of students in school are easily organized but hard to hold, for reasons already mentioned. Selections in this group should be made on the basis of probable enduring interest as well as wide influence.

To any administrator of experience the thought will have come ere this that he has acquired several more committees to tell him how to run the university. But further reflection will convince the wise administrator that, instead of adding another routine committee, he is now engaged, with the help of his ten key men, in organizing, not advisers, but combat troops. An instance of what is possible may be found in the man of means who went to the president of his Alma Mater and said: "Some of us want to go to work. What can we do for you?" "You can get me twenty million dollars," cheerfully replied the president; and the man said "all right" and soon walked out. At last report not all the twenty million had been obtained, but a good part of it was signed and sealed. That kind of active service is available to every college administrator. This man and his associates have never sought to tell this president how to run his university. The more and the harder they have worked, the more loyal they have become. There is no way in the world to put such people to work without organizing them for clear and inspiring objectives.

Without taking up any more time and effort than the administrator will find himself normally and inevitably devoting to the general status and welfare of the institution, he will now have come a considerable distance. He has determined upon academic prestige as more than a theoretical summum bonum—as, in fact, the activating purpose of all that he contemplates doing. After full and free discussion he will have defined the area of that pres-



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tige as it applies to his own institution. He and his associates will know the groupings of the implements they expect to use. He will have chosen, with utmost care, the ten men, more or less, upon whom the movement is to rely from then on; and he will have tested them for their interest, ability, and determination as well as for their understanding of its purpose. If nothing more than this were ever accomplished—if the administrator were to die at this point—the effort would be worth while. But this is only the beginning. Already there will be felt the burgeoning of a new life.

Suppose, now, the administrator does nothing of the sort. Suppose his institution accepts the status quo, and he devotes himself to the manifold problems of each new day, with occasional visits to the principal alumni associations for the purpose of bringing them a message from the old school, and perhaps locating some endowment money while there or finding some good students. This much, at least, can be done; and it is almost all that can be done by an administrator working alone. It ignores the potential of available assistance. It leads to disorganized and sometimes undesirable forms of effort, and it invites almost every kind of proposal and criticism from those who have never thought out for themselves the real purpose of the institution—which means from almost everybody. What good is a more or less feeble alumni group, or even an active and vociferous one, if it is going up the wrong street, or going nowhere in particular? Even large institutions possessed of traveling secretaries and panoplied with publicity staffs may and do waste time and money for lack of organized effort toward an agreed objective. They are not allowing their institution to render full service.

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Nothing could be farther from the intent of this discussion than any desire to establish or defend a fixed procedure in developing a prestige program. Regimentation of any sort is as fatal to the main purpose of enlisting individual effort as it is to the free air of the institution itself. In every group and in every institution and to every administrator and faculty member the factors of historical background, existing organization, area of prestige, and external and internal events provide a richness of opportunity unique and valuable. One of the problems of the administrator is to reach decisions as to method that will employ all of these variables to the greatest advantage. Contemporary history of scholastic institutions is its own evidence that this is done by means and methods varying from somewhat awe-inspiring reorganizations of curriculum and personnel to operations emulating the smooth stillness of a moonlit river. It all depends.

What cannot be ignored or evaded—what is, indeed, the administrator's real source of strength—is a definition of the institution's area of prestige plus the organization of available resources to make use of this prestige for the good of the university; and this requires a nucleus of informed, intelligent, and capable support. Whenever one of these essentials is short-circuited, intentionally or otherwise, the full power of the effort is weakened by that much. The somewhat detailed outline thus far developed is in principle a workable scheme—one that has been made to work before now. Its exact application will vary in every instance, and this variation occurs in all succeeding steps.

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dollars: even that conversation led to a well-organized undertaking over a period of years.

However it is undertaken, two kinds of results will soon be in evidence, from faculty, alumni, students, parents and—not so much—from trustees. The more immediate reactions may appear to be in the form of trivia. They are not trivia. They are significant in themselves, and, if they are left alone, they achieve difficult proportions. They achieve much, also, on the right side, if they receive consideration and attention.

From the parents we may learn that a system of fees, over and above tuition, health, and laboratory expenses, has grown to a point that is actually burdensome. The children, they say, are met by a new fee in just about every course they take. What is the tuition itself supposed to provide? Perhaps something can be done about this; perhaps nothing. Either way an opportunity is found for contact with parents which may bring them into active support of the program, may change adverse critics to friends.

Or somebody keeps sending out letters that are cold and formal and irritating to parents anxious for the good name and good progress of their children. Almost every institution of size, in and out of the scholastic world, suffers from antagonisms developed in this way. And the parents will have other things to say.

From the alumni it is reasonably safe to predict that complaints will flow in to the effect that nobody tells them what is going on or ever writes to them except for money. Almost surely, also, some of the alumni will jump the fence of the limitation and call for a winning team or a new coach. It may be well to stretch a point, which to

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so many of them seems so essential, and get to an understanding.

And at the start, student suggestions will be mostly about their daily life. Is service slow in the cafeteria? Do they have to spend half a day or more in signing up? Is it hard to decide what courses to take, and does anyone really help them? Plenty will be heard from the students, if the student contact is truly in their confidence.

From the faculty an entirely different response will come, as would be expected, yet many a faculty member has a pebble in his shoe that can be got rid of, as well as bottled-up ideas that may well prove to be for the lasting good of the institution.

"Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week?" Have all this effort and planning been expended for no better purpose than to elicit additional complaints? The experienced administrator knows better. The first step toward a new attitude and a new interest has been taken. The door to future contacts, often of large value, has been opened. One more thing has been done: A position of confidence from which they can proceed has been established in our nuclei. All these seeming trivia are so much underbrush in the path of advancement, and nearly all can be cleared away to the advantage of the institution itself.

The temptation to skip the step of adjusting complaints is always strong. It is a purely ostrich attitude. These various obstacles to the progress of the institution exist and will continue to exist unless they are dealt with. They are not small in the minds of those who complain about them. It is true that an administrator of great strength can sometimes override them or blow them away in a

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whirlwind of energy; as a rule, they are not so easily overcome.

Sometimes, also, stout-hearted and loyal groups will get into action without reference to, or interest in, these minor sources of exasperation and will take them in their stride. Too often this method wears itself out against walls of passive indifference or open hostility.

Happily, most of the criticisms from any group will be with reference to only two or three subjects that have become standard sources of conversation and irritation within that group. When these are cleared away, almost everyone is happy. The institution that has nothing to expect along these lines is either extremely fortunate or else is moribund in its relationships.

Almost without exception the man who has seen his criticism graciously received, fairly considered, and either explained or adjusted is ready for co-operative effort. He feels—and he tells the world—that his Alma Mater has come alive and that they are doing things up there. The university—all of it—is “getting results”; everything is going to be all right; and he is going to help.

The first long step in good public relations for any institution has been taken; the known and just causes of dissatisfaction have been eliminated, and the irritated have been soothed. Experts in public relations frequently receive staggering fees for accomplishing nothing more than this, and perhaps not so much. It has been done at very little expense, and the institution itself is better off. The more enduring portion of the effort is also beginning to be realized, for, meanwhile, the nuclei in each group are studying ways and means for group usefulness. When their plan is formulated, they will take over the task of

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putting it into effect. This will require constant attention, usually far beyond the personal capacity of the administrator's time and effort. He will require highly capable assistance, through which will filter back to him unexpected and welcome contributions of new strength and encouragement. The time involved is less than he would expend in the discussion of futilities that can now gracefully be referred to the committee chairman for consideration, with the added promise that the administrator himself will finally review them with the committee.

In all groups there must be, as a prerequisite, a full understanding that a better use of present resources *within each group* is the goal to be achieved in order to build greater prestige. This is a powerful deterrent to day-dreaming and erecting castles in the air. Any faculty member possessed of even moderate imagination can formulate a program of enlargement of his field of usefulness with additional financing, and, even, a similar panorama for the whole university. Very possibly he has already done so. Such planning has its place, but not in this program. Loyalty, devotion, and sober determination are the constituents of any attempt to make better bricks with what straw is available, until more straw is provided. How is it possible to be more useful to the student? How is it possible to be more useful to the world? How do these purposes conflict and how can they be balanced? How can my department improve itself without tearing down some other department? If I am carrying an overload, what adjustments, within reason and budget, would relieve some of it? How can the institution as a whole render better service in its area of prestige? Some men will find little interest in such considerations; they

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want most to be let alone, and not much else can be done with them. Others, far beyond the original nucleus, will find these themes inspiring, and their contributions will be notable.

Next to the faculty, in delicacy as in importance, comes the student body. The type of sponsor for this part of the program has been indicated. What he is going to do, certainly at the beginning, is to feel his way. It is not fair to say that student loyalties as they now exist are spurious, or even that they are carryovers from high-school days. It is in the nature of youth to be proud of something, if only a mongrel dog. It is in the nature of youth to be ambitious for leadership and recognition by its fellows and to be gregarious and ebullient. All this wears down to pleasant and sentimental memories in the battle of life, and such memories, except to perpetual sophomores, are not so very important in the mind of the alumnus.

Here, then, are the students, often for four years—four most impressionable years. Later on, we shall write them letters about the institution—too often, perhaps, about money; we shall spend much time and some cash in cultivating them. From the day they graduate, we start paying special attention to them—and it doesn't amount to a great deal. What brings loyalty in after years is not the annual appeal for funds, nor the annual alumni dinner, so much as the student's own recollections of his college years and what he got out of them. Yet it is during their undergraduate period that, except for class work, we usually let students alone as much as possible. This does not make sense either from the viewpoint of the welfare of the students or from the purely selfish viewpoint of a consideration of future relations with them as alumni.

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In one sense, during this period, and especially with reference to undergraduates, the institution stands *in loco parentis*. This has nothing to do with the hours they keep or their personal habits, although these are often and sometimes unwisely subject to regulation. It is indisputable that, for the most part, these young people are on their own for the first time in their lives. They are born into a new world, and the cord is cut. The worst thing that can happen to them is the impossible effort to recreate the warm shelter from which they have emerged. They must learn to walk by themselves and fend for themselves; but this does not mean that they are to be thrown into the street before they can stand. A good many of them are scared, and all are uncertain, if they have good sense, as to their personal adjustments. Nearly all colleges so fully recognize this situation that it is mentioned here only to indicate the seemingly unlimited possibilities that confront the nucleus assigned to student relationships.

Our purpose is not primarily to put these students to work for us at this time. It is to create a relationship, preferably an unconscious relationship, between the student and the institution that will go deeper and will last longer than the loyalties and enthusiasms born of youth itself. A big brother is just as useful to a good boy as to a bad boy, and in this new world nearly all students are virtual infants. Any good dean could write a book on their perplexed gropings, and experience shows they often are pathetically appreciative of friendly interest from successful people in the outside world toward which they are feeling their way. It is to the credit of many Greek letter societies that they maintain chapter advisers of this char-



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acter. The good ones go far beyond financial inspections and helping the boys out of scrapes. They build a loyalty to the fraternity that is sometimes surprising to administrators dealing with alumni; but they say little about it to the undergraduates, and as a rule they stoutly support the administration. This same enduring loyalty can be built for the university and in somewhat the same way, provided it is justified by prestige.

But, while our ultimate goal is far off, the student, long before graduation, starts toward it on his own account. His pride in his relationships, or his dissatisfaction with them, is reflected throughout every vacation and visit home, among his family and friends, and in contacts with students from other schools. In the upper classes and among graduate students this interest may be more largely in the scholastic values—the medical student is proud of his work under the great Dr. Smith; he gets a lot out of it; nobody else knows so much along Dr. Smith's special line. These students have found themselves.

It is in the lower classes that friendly encouragement is most helpful. In some fraternities every freshman has an upperclass guide and mentor until he attains an equilibrium. A possible approach, and one that has been used, is to organize interest, through upperclassmen, in the institution itself, its history and traditions, its great teachers, past and present, and its eminent alumni—around which youthful loyalties and aspirations may wrap themselves and grow. More immediately practical, it must be realized that, for every dollar that parents spend on education, the institution spends another dollar. The time for the student to learn that is when he is in school.

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The wisely chosen nucleus for student relationships, without ever mentioning loyalty at all, will find more avenues for building lasting loyalty than it can possibly administer. It is a feeble parent who has to preach loyalty to his children. The loyalty itself already is at hand; all that is needed is to guide it and crystallize it around the institution's real values. This it is the task of the nucleus to work out; it is not the task of the administrator. It is probably the most difficult assignment of all, and the one of greatest potentialities. Eventually it will tie back, as will all other parts of the program, to the real eminence of the faculty.

Parents, during the time their children are in school, are more than wide open for the message of prestige. They have chosen this school because it has seemed the best for whatever they want their children to get. They want and need justification for their opinions and decisions and for the money they are spending. Parents talk, also, with other parents whose children are in other schools. If the best they can say is, "Well, Robert wanted to go to X, so we let him," they know in their hearts they have been deficient in their parentage. Parents will absorb like a sponge all the good news anyone can tell them about the prestige and eminence of the institution in which their children are being educated, and they will remember it and talk about it.

As a rule, corralling fathers is hard; but it has been done. Mothers, with more leisure or opportunity for social contacts and a more immediate relationship to their children, readily coalesce into mothers' clubs or similar groups. Fathers and mothers alike will visit the campus from time to time on their own account, and more fre-

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quently if they are made welcome and are invited to do so. An institution in which graduation ceremonies are held after examinations are concluded may find it possible to invite the parents of senior students to occupy vacant dormitory rooms when attending the graduation. Some institutions invite parents to attend alumni dinners and like gatherings at which the president or other high officer of the institution is the guest of honor. Parents can be enlisted perhaps more easily than any other of our groups; it takes a reasonable amount of planning and effort on the part of the nucleus assigned.

The average trustee on the average campus feels nearly as strange and out of place as a freshman on his first day, and to no small number of administrators that is exactly the way he ought to feel. The more he stays away, the better it is. If this is the policy of the administrator, we may leave it in his hands, with the hope that his reasons are adequate. In that event, also, we may write off our eminent boards, lock, stock, and barrel, as of no use beyond watching the investments and listing their names on the first page of the catalogue.

It seems possible that the trustees, in some instances, may render greater service. As a rule, their contacts are among exceptionally influential people and they themselves are alert and capable. What they know about the institution they generally will tell. As they know more of its prestige, they become more interested. If the average trustee knew his university as well as he knows his golf course, he would be as proud of it and talk nearly as much about it.

Trustees, perhaps, cannot be lectured, but they can be made welcome. Their interest can encourage and

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their education; but as a primary source of revenue they often leave much to be desired.

By and large, more time has perhaps been spent in deploring the paucity of alumni contributions than in seeking the reasons for it; yet these reasons are not hard to find. Having examined them, the nucleus will know better what to do about them. It is the general experience that donations vary in inverse proportion to the distance of the donor from the institution. Even large and heavily endowed universities draw mainly upon surprisingly small adjacent areas for their support and gifts, and, more often than not, the number of prosperous alumni within such areas is small. No doubt flourishing alumni groups in distant centers of population are valuable, but the geographical determination of gift volumes seems a fairly steady factor and excludes a considerable percentage of all alumni. It is probably true that the area immediately adjacent to the institution usually gets the most intensive cultivation; and this is likely to continue to be the case, since the farther away you go the more time and money you require to accomplish the same result.

As to major gifts, also, the percentage of the population both able and willing to make them is exceedingly small, with no good prospect of remaining even at its present limited status. While this means that the institution needs all possible financial help from its alumni, and while there is every indication that the gift-base must be broadened, unhappily these considerations do not overcome the geographical factor nor give money to alumni who otherwise haven't much of it—that is, to most of them. Although *Who's Who in America* is full of the names of college graduates, and all statistics show their

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incomes, in percentages, to be far above those of people of noncollege antecedents, the average alumnus is not sufficiently well-to-do to join the ranks of large donors. His above-average income is balanced by an above-average level of living and by his ambitions for security and for his children. A large percentage of alumni contributing something each year is probably a realizable ambition, although even here the turnover is unreasonably high. This is not because they have not been importuned to give.

As to those relatively few alumni who have acquired wealth and have come to the place in life where they reflect upon what will happen to it when they die, the fact of being alumni is an advantage to the extent that they have personal knowledge of Alma Mater—but not much more. Most often these alumni give thought first of all to what they wish to accomplish by their bequests and, thereafter, to the institution best qualified to carry out their wishes, which may not be their Alma Mater at all. Every administrator knows numerous instances of large bequests of this nature.

To all alumni who can give, and especially to those who cannot give largely, the message of prestige is likely to prove a greater incentive than any appeal based on need or loyalty. But there is another and better service that alumni as a group can render. It is as bearers of the prestige-message, as sources of information regarding gift-opportunities, and as active representatives of the institution in every field, including the field of philanthropy. All alumni can contribute here, and all will do so to the extent that their knowledge and pride are upheld and increased. So inspired, their own contributions will be as large as they can make them, and their

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usefulness will be multiplied. Some will assist in finding exceptional students and sending them to the institutions. Some will report on possible new developments, based on their own practical experience. Some will confute subterranean mutterings, and all will present a most valuable contribution to a prestige program—a proud and confident alumni structure. It is the primary task of the alumni nucleus to plan not for greater alumni gifts but for greater alumni knowledge and active support of prestige.

What added burden, thus far, has been placed upon the administrator, and what does he profit by it?

On the time-debit side, he has first defined for himself through consultation and examination the prestige area of his institution, so clearly and simply that others can comprehend it readily.

He has chosen, perhaps, ten men to whom this definition appeals so strongly that they want to go to work for it, as representing the highest possible service they can render; and he has thus set up three groups of nuclei (students, alumni, and parents), reserving for himself the faculty and trustees.

He has spent considerable time enlisting the active support of his ten men and establishing their basic objectives. He has called on them for proposals as to what their groups can do and how they can do it.

On the credit side, he has set up a standard to which all good men may rally, with the reasonable expectation that many will do so, since they can understand it and be proud of it.

He has made progress toward unified effort for a known objective.

## Group Activities

He has provided means for disposing of many minor and incidental matters that now, in all probability, take up far more time than he can well afford.

He has become in fact, as in theory, the head of the institution's public relations.

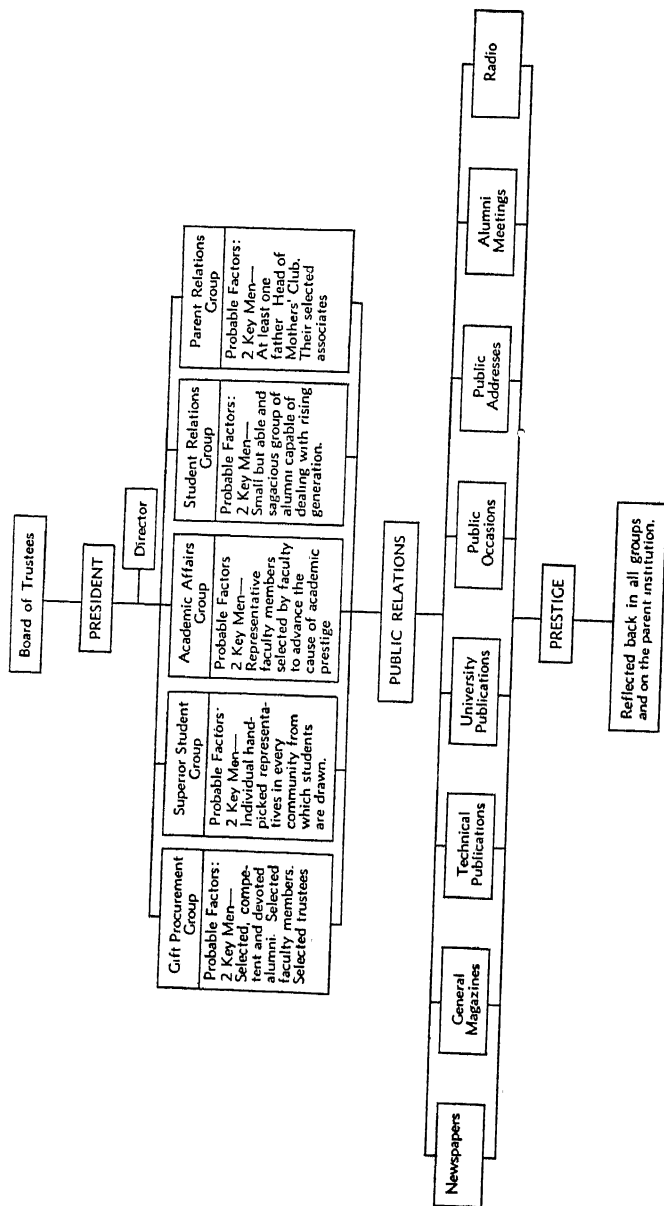
He has laid a foundation for these public relations, and all that they imply, that should endure as long as the institution itself; and he has made a great stride forward in activating them.

He has found new sources of information, encouragement, understanding, and support.

He has multiplied his personal effectiveness in every field of administrative endeavor.

In a general way, his enterprise may be mapped somewhat in accordance with the chart facing page 49.

# FLOW CHART OF ORGANIZED PUBLIC RELATIONS





## VI

### *Operation*

THE UNIVERSITY that expends a quarter of a million dollars or more in commemoration of an anniversary thereby pays tribute in that amount to the value and effectiveness of educational prestige—or else is merely indulging in an orgy of self-gratification, an unlikely probability. Wise expenditures for prestige more than justify themselves, because, like most living things, prestige will somehow grow, with any chance at all, but, if real good is to come from it, requires constant and intelligent care.

Financial returns from prestige programs in which the techniques of institutional financial promotion are sound may easily be in the ratio of ten to one on the investment, year after year, and sometimes double that ratio, in addition to all other accruals in the form of better students, greater faculty eminence, and greater opportunities for usefulness.

The administrator who is now ready to embark on his prestige program—who has defined his area of prestige and has organized his initial forces—has created, in effect, a new activity, a new department; and even he himself may realize with some surprise that, for the first time, he now has a full-fledged department of public relations. Rather than a “fortuitous concourse” of unrelated

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activities, frequently in conflict with each other, he finds them all together under the banner of a single purpose. He will realize, too, that this department, so constituted, will present its own special problems, perhaps even more problems than most departments, because it operates so largely through volunteer assistance. All the care that has gone into the selection and indoctrination of the initial nuclei, and all their willingness and good intentions, may prove wasted unless the conditions governing such operations are observed. These conditions, as experience in maintaining volunteer effort over extended periods has proved, may be stated thus as to such personnel:

1. They must be able to feel that they are accomplishing something worth while and that their work is effective.
2. They must be made to feel that their efforts are recognized and appreciated.
3. They must be staffed to provide the guidance, support, service, and encouragement necessary to their continued effort.

Good men will not continue in a voluntary enterprise in which they do not find themselves rendering a service. The better they are, the sooner they will quietly dissolve away from any organization unless they find therein, by their own initiative or by suggestion, objectives that measure up to their own standards of worth-while effort. In that event one has left only those who enjoy the social contacts involved or find membership without performance a satisfaction in itself. These people are of no value in a prestige program.

To give due credit for such efforts is no easy task. The readiness of high-minded and able men and women to

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serve, their eagerness to help, is so sincere, so heartfelt, and so generous that these services are likely to be accepted with utmost gratitude but without adequate acknowledgment. For a continuing undertaking this is fatal. Nothing in the world, except mother love, will keep going without reward or the hope of reward in some form; and the reward of an approving conscience is hardly ever a sufficient stimulus to continued active effort. To support the nuclei, to supply the contact and guidance they will need, to see that they receive their just appreciation, in a word, to operate the whole prestige program now gathered together in one basket of public relations, will require competent direction and staff service. It is a responsibility to be delegated by the administrator if he is to be free for other duties; and, under a capable executive, as has been indicated, it will finance itself many times over. Yet the administrator's contact with it must be constantly intimate. Here, more than in most instances, he will make many decisions as to large policy and not infrequently as to detail, and, in all his relationships, he himself will be an active participant in the prestige enterprise.

He must know, therefore, even from day to day, what is being done without having to do it himself; he must control it at all times and yet be largely free from the planning of it and from the execution of these plans once he has approved them. All this becomes practicable with a unified program under his delegated director—as close to the administrator as his own skin. The relief and comfort and help he will derive from an arrangement so organized and integrated will not be inconsequential. In football parlance, whichever way he may elect to run,

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his interference will be ahead of him and around him, and paths will be opened. For this it is essential that a close daily personal relationship be maintained between the administrator and his delegate.

To some extent and sometimes to a material extent, prestige once established will, of itself, result in more gifts, abler students, and like desiderata. This happens more or less frequently, but not often enough even among the more famous institutions to justify full reliance upon it. Prestige is a force to be used. Its efficient use depends upon coherent planning, organization, assistance, and guidance—such as has now been developed; and the program, thus organized, will include every aspect of the institution's public relations because it intends to use all of them to accomplish definite ends. Different groups may work toward objectives best suited for them, whether gift procurement or better students or public exercises or what not, and each in its own way and under its own officers; all must be able to draw upon a common source for their service and support. To segregate any part of this program from the rest does not appear to offer any advantages. It is likely to create groups working at cross purposes, and inevitably it establishes divergent operations each requiring separate oversight, direction, and assistance, besides weakening by so much the whole structure.

Public relations, in whole or in part, without such organization and objective are meaningless and without value. In aiming them, in all their manifestations, toward the chosen area of prestige, the director will first consider what he may have already in existence that can be made useful, or more useful, to the various groups that

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in turn, control and strengthen all of these media and will dictate their content and distribution. As to all of them, the essential difference will be that they are being utilized in a purposeful manner, in achieving a known objective; they have ceased to be firecrackers, or duds. This reorganization of basic service material will be a continuing process, as the various nuclei develop their programs and go to work on them.

The executive in charge of the prestige program may find that under proper direction the existing staff is adequate for this purpose or that it requires augmenting to cover the ground. The one sure thing is that the nuclei will have to be fed.

If we now recall to mind the five essentials of Lincoln's procedure, it will be evident that they are all employed in this program. The institution is better equipped than he was; it has larger resources of organization, and most of what he knew by instinct or acquired by effort is now pretty well established in practice; but nobody has invented or disclosed any basic element that he did not understand and use. And he went one step farther. Within his defined area he steadily sought ways and means of bringing all of his purposes into a final realization. As good an instance as any is his project for gradual emancipation through purchase; it was a step toward a restored Union in which all should become free men. It was not the Union that existed before the war, but a better one, that he sought.

So, too, the administrator will never be content with a prestige area that comprises only past performance and present eminence. His institution may fall short of being, today, "a university of high degree" or whatever he has

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defined as its proper area; unless it is already perfect, such is bound to be the case. This does not invalidate the definition, if it is a true one. That definition does bring into high relief the things that are needed and must be produced in order that the institution may measure up to the responsibilities it has assumed, and it does mightily assist in concentrating effort on these things.

How this shall be done is never the same problem in any two institutions. In some instances the missing pieces in the puzzle seem quietly to slip into place, one after another, whether they are professorships or dormitories or fellowships or laboratories—the planning is perceptible from the results. This is the method more usually found in educational fields; but it is not the only one, nor necessarily the most successful. A ten-year plan, or a twenty-year plan, boldly blueprinted, graphically illustrated, and as completely developed as would be the projection of a commercial enterprise, has large possibilities in every aspect of prestige endeavor; and experience has shown that it can be made remarkably effective under proper guidance. The administrator, his executive, his counselors, and the trustees will have to decide what plan and method are indicated by their status, prospects, and needs.

In this consideration, changes that have come about in the sources of gifts for educational purposes will be found to have a significance already appreciated by most administrators. Increasingly, more gifts of moderate size must be found to replace the diminishing number of large fortunes and estates from which the princely endowments of even a few years ago used to flow. The whole base of gift-procurement must be broadened; indeed, it has al-

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ready broadened itself. Here it is well to keep in mind that institutional size has almost nothing to do with prestige and there is nothing in this for the administrator of a smaller institution to be worried about. What administrators of all institutions, big and little, must have in mind, if they look to the public for support in whole or in part, is the evident necessity of spreading their prestige message over a numerically wider audience and following it more efficiently into many avenues instead of only a few.

It is said of one able administrator of earlier days that when he needed a new endowment he used to put on his hat, go down town, and get it. With due allowance for evident oversimplification, it is possible that, even today, the exceptional administrator can and does personally duplicate that procedure; but, for the most part, from now on, such individual effort is not going to take in enough territory, and already most large institutions are on a broader and sounder basis of gift procurement. In every institution the means for such organization are at the command of the administrator, and he may feel fairly sure that he is going to need them.

## VII

### *Continuous Growth*

TO ESTABLISH a really effective system of public relations in an institution of higher education may easily require from three to five years, although, as we have seen, a good deal can be accomplished in less time. During the first one of these five years the administrator will put in more than he takes out. Thereafter he will take out, in increasing volume, more than he puts in, of time, thought, and effort. Even in the first year his investment is likely to be far less than would be required by any hit-or-miss procedure, and he will be stimulated by the knowledge that he knows where he is going.

The first year, or most of it, may well be devoted to a definition of the institution's area of prestige. This is likely to be the outcome of the administrator's personal thinking, developed by conversations with his advisers among his faculty, trustees, and alumni. He will find that some of these have never given it much thought, and some will continue in that frame of mind; but, more often than not, his idea will strike fire, at least to the extent of being interesting, if seemingly nebulous. More and more it will become a subject of active discussion and active interest. It is quite possible that the administrator may find it desirable to restate his original definition, in his own mind, or replace it with a better one. Much depends on this defi-



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dition; for, to the extent that it is exact, acceptable, and appealing, it will gather support.

This process of developing a definition deliberately and through consultation is further advantageous in providing the administrator with a considerable amount of new light on the best possibilities for his various nuclei. Not necessarily, and generally not at all, will the eager enthusiast prove to be an ideal member of these important groups. The man who is slow at the start, who mulls it over in his mind, who voluntarily returns to the subject at a later time, who is convincing himself as he goes along, and who when finally convinced will take off his coat and go to work with determination is the man who will keep going when the going is slow and hard, as it is bound to be at times over a period of years.

It takes time to learn who these men are; for even good men are of little value unless they are thoroughly devoted to the undertaking. "Give me liberty or give me death," can be said in a couple of seconds; but the conviction that led to its saying took years in its growth, and many good men did not agree with it. A chance meeting on the train, an informal after-dinner chat, a momentary encounter on the campus—all provide opportunities for posing the question involved, and all may be productive. Eventually, the administrator will winnow out the right men to take on the responsibilities of the various groups, and by the end of the first year the choices should be clear; possibly by then, also, the nuclei themselves may be ready for organization or be actually organized.

In the second year, or thereabouts, these nuclei will go to work. Their first task will be to outline what they themselves believe they can accomplish within their own

## Continuous Growth

groups and how it can be done. And for this purpose they will need to meet frequently with the administrator or his executive assistant in charge of the prestige program. In this process they too will need time for discussion, thought, and planning. They will find their first proposals often need correction in order to come within the range of practicalities; and, as they in turn begin to reach out, they will find work to be done in clearing the ground of dead wood in the form of ancient grievances, some of which may be found valid. A year is not too much time for any nucleus to use in enlarging its membership and getting ready to go.

In the third year the nuclei will begin testing out their programs in actual practice; and here, too, deliberation rather than haste is desirable. One actual accomplishment during the third year, as for example, the creation of wise and active alumni committees on exceptional students in the various cities and towns from which most of the institution's students come or ought to come, may be satisfactory performance for the alumni nucleus during its third year, something it can feel good about. However, it is probable that more than this can be undertaken safely.

The fourth and fifth years should see all nuclei really at work on well considered programs, and should provide opportunity for adjustments and replacements on the basis of the experience of the preceding years.

At the end of five years, and even earlier, some of the original volunteers will have died and others, no matter how carefully selected, will have grown weary or have moved to another part of the country, or for other reasons will have ceased to be active. This is probably an advantage. It clears the way for new blood and provides an opportunity for widening circles of influence. To the

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extent that each nucleus is a going concern, with an objective that appeals to men and women as worth while, abundant replacements for each vacancy will be available.

As to each nucleus and its proposals, it is the responsibility of the administrator, with his executive, to aid in selecting objectives in the order of their importance and to dispose his forces accordingly. One of the needs is sure to be money; and a selected nucleus, fortified by its belief in and enthusiasm for the institution in its own particular area of prestige, may be called upon to draw up a program, under administrative guidance, to increase endowment and support. This is a specialized type of effort in which the administration will need to provide planning and guidance at all times. Yet it will be assisted, indirectly but effectively, by the various activities of all nuclei along all lines.

This interaction is as real as the interplay of forces on a cantilever bridge. Good undergraduate relations, for example, may do as much to bring in new and exceptional students as will a committee especially assigned for that purpose and may even be directly effective in producing unsolicited donations—all without conscious effort beyond the natural enthusiasm of the undergraduate. Parents, solicitous for the welfare of their offspring, may become almost equally solicitous for the need of the university in educating other people's children. Trustees with pride in their relationship and at least a working knowledge of what is going on have been known to produce remarkable results in furthering the aims and ambitions of their institution, and more than one college is doing fine work today because its faculty members are jealous of its eminence and prestige. There will always be, it is true, peaks and low

## Continuous Growth

points of prestige endeavor; but progress and, most often, ultimate success will be conditioned by day-to-day and week-to-week persistence in organization and support of volunteer aides. Unlike a drive or a series of drives, such a program builds as it goes along—every year it is better than the year before in its operations and its results.

The sooner the institution's area of prestige is defined and the sooner all concerned are in accord regarding it, the better are the chances for the survival and progress of the institution as one of educational distinction. This applies even to tax-supported institutions, many of which are actively interested in endowments from private sources most likely to be given to institutions in proportion to their prestige and in the special areas of their prestige. It applies above all to faculties, whose members, in almost every instance, prefer to associate themselves with known areas of prestige and who usually (and unfortunately) receive part of their compensation in this way. It is a compelling force in obtaining students of unusual quality, and, where it is notable, it is an inspiration to alumni and parents. For institutions, as for men, it is the beginning and the end of all intelligent public-relations effort.

The difference in effectiveness between public relations thus aimed and pointed and those that are not is always surprising. This will be true even for administrators with an instinctive flair for public relations problems, and it is particularly true for those who find such problems a source of difficulty and annoyance. No one has improved upon the five essentials of Lincoln's procedure, and no one ever will. Their intelligent application is the only requisite to their success. Lincoln thought it was worth while.